DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 427 430 EA 029 680

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TITLE	The School within Us: The Creation of an Innovative Public School. SUNY Series, Democracy and Education. SUNY Series, Restructuring and Social Change.
ISBN	ISBN-0-7914-3590-3
PUB DATE	1998-00-00
NOTE	234p.
AVAILABLE FROM	State University of New York Press, c/o CUP Services, Box 6525, Ithaca, NY 14851; Tel: 607-277-2211; Tel: 800-666-2211 (Toll Free); Fax: 800-688-2877 (Toll Free); Fax: 607-277-6292; e-mail: orderbook@cupserv.org (paperback: ISBN-0-7914-3590-3, $10.95; hardcover: ISBN-0-7914-3589-X, $34.50).
PUB TYPE	Reports - Descriptive (141)
EDRS PRICE	Document Not Available from EDRS.
DESCRIPTORS	Educational Change; Educational Innovation; High Schools; Instructional Innovation; *Laboratory Schools; Nongraded Student Evaluation; Politics of Education; Public Schools; *Student Evaluation

ABSTRACT

This book recounts how a community of teachers, parents, and students took charge of a conventional school and created an unconventional one. It describes the challenges faced by the Bethlehem Lab School--from its inception in 1988 to the graduation of its first senior class. The school was conceived as a performance-based-assessment school, and its supporters were committed to a small-scale environment in a suburban community with a typically large high school and wide elective offerings. It is a story about six teachers and the families who joined them to create a new type of school. Their creation, the Lab School, functions as a school within a school, offering a focused, integrated curriculum that culminates in a senior-internship program and thesis project. The book recounts the many practical issues faced by the stakeholders and thus dwells on political and institutional concerns, such as building support, raising funds, addressing the needs of various interest groups, recruiting students and implementing the philosophical and curricular ideas that were generated. The text is primarily a narrative, offering a first-hand account of the planning, opening, and evolution of the Lab School. Four appendices offer information on graduates and samples of student evaluations. (RJM)

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